

CLAIMS

We claim.

1 1. A method for integrated event tracking of an electronic escrow
2 transaction, comprising:

3 receiving an instruction from a purchaser, via a network, to
4 effect an electronic escrow transaction associated with a sale,
5 made via the network, of goods or services from a seller;

6 directing at least one network communication with each of the
7 purchaser, the seller and at least one financial institution in
8 effecting the electronic escrow transaction; and

9 storing a log of each communication, including the
10 instruction, associated with the electronic escrow transaction

11 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

12 initiating a debit from an account associated with the
13 purchaser;

14 storing an indication of the initiation of the debit from the
15 purchaser account;

16 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller;
17 and

18 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
19 seller account.

20 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

21 initiating a debit from an account associated with a
22 processing agent; and

23 storing an indication of the initiation of the debit from the
24 processing agent account.

25 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:

26 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller;
27 and

28 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
29 seller account;

wherein the credit to the seller account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the processing agent account.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

transmitting a notice, via the network, to the seller that funds from an account associated with the purchaser are available and that the seller should ship the goods to, or provide the service for, the purchaser; and

storing an indication that the notice has been transmitted to the seller.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein:

the notice is transmitted after at least one of (i) a predetermined period, beginning at initiation of a debit to an account associated with a purchaser, has elapsed, or (ii) funds from the purchaser account are credited to an account associated with a service provider.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving, via the network, a first notice of one of (i) the goods having been shipped, or (ii) the services having been performed;

storing an indication that the first notice has been received;

transmitting a second notice, via the network, to the purchaser that the seller has one of (i) shipped the goods to the purchaser, or (ii) performed the services for the purchaser; and

storing an indication that the second notice has been transmitted to the purchaser;

wherein the first notice is received from at least one of (i) a shipping agent, or (ii) the seller.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the first notice includes a delivery tracking number.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the goods

3 having been received from the seller and being acceptable, or (ii)
4 the services having been acceptably performed by the seller; and
5 storing an indication that the notice has been received;
6 wherein the notice is received from at least one of (i) the
7 seller, (ii) a shipping agent, or (iii) the purchaser.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
2 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller;
3 and
4 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
5 seller account;
6 wherein the credit to the seller account is initiated
7 subsequent to receiving the notice.

1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the goods
3 having been shipped by the seller, or (ii) the services having been
4 performed by the seller;
5 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller;
6 storing an indication that the notice has been received; and
7 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
8 seller account;
9 wherein the credit to the seller account is initiated after a
10 predetermined period, beginning at receipt of the notice; and
11 wherein the notice is received from at least one of (i) the
12 seller, or (ii) a shipping agent.

1 12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the goods
3 having been received from the seller and being unacceptable, (ii)
4 the goods having not been received from the seller, (iii) the
5 services having not been acceptably performed by the seller, or
6 (iv) the services having not been performed by the seller; and
7 storing an indication that the notice has been received.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the notice includes a notice

2 to suspend a pending credit to an account associated with the
3 seller

1 14. The method of claim 12, wherein the notice includes a notice
2 to reverse a debit to an account associated with the purchaser.

1 15. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving, via the network, a first notice that the goods have
3 been returned shipped to the seller;
4 storing an indication that the first notice has been received;
5 transmitting to the seller, via the network, a second notice
6 that the goods have been returned shipped from the purchaser; and
7 storing an indication that the second notice has been
8 transmitted to the seller;
9 wherein the first notice is received from at least one of (i)
10 the purchaser, or (ii) a shipping agent.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the first notice includes a
2 delivery tracking number.

1 17. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
2 receiving, via the network, a third notice that the goods have
3 been received by the seller; and
4 storing an indication that the third notice has been received;
5 wherein the third notice is received from at least one of (i)
6 the seller, or (ii) the shipping agent.

1 18. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 initiating a credit to an account associated with the
3 purchaser; and
4 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
5 purchaser account;
6 wherein the credit to the purchaser account is initiated at
7 after least one of (i) upon receipt of a notice, via the network
8 from at least one of the seller or a shipping agent, that the goods
9 have been delivered to the seller, or (ii) after a predetermined

10 period, beginning at a notification to the seller that the
11 purchaser has shipped the goods to the seller, has elapsed.

1 19. The method of claim 1, wherein the goods or services are goods
2 or services purchased from an Internet auction.

1 20. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 initiating a debit from an account associated with the
3 purchaser;

4 initiating a credit to an escrow account associated with a
5 processing agent;

6 initiating a debit to the escrow account associated with the
7 processing agent;

8 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller;
9 storing an indication of the initiation of the debit to the
10 purchaser account; and

11 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
12 seller account.

13 21. The method of claim 20, wherein the credit to the escrow
14 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the purchaser
15 account.

1 22. The method of claim 20, wherein the credit to the seller
2 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the escrow
3 account.

1 23. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving the instruction via a web page generated subsequent
3 to the purchaser selecting a hyper-link presented to the purchaser
4 by an Internet web site selling goods or services;
5 wherein the web page presented to the purchaser includes
6 details of the sale.

1 24. The method of claim 1, wherein the stored logged
2 communications include an indication of the date and time each

3 communication is received or transmitted.

1 25. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 retrieving any of the logged and stored communications.

1 26. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 receiving, from a shipping agent, a first notice that goods
3 have been delivered to the purchaser;

4 storing an indication that the first notice has been received;

5 receiving, from the purchaser, a second notice that the
6 delivered goods are acceptable;

7 storing an indication that the second notice has been
8 received; and

9 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller.

1 27. The method of claim 26, wherein:

2 the credit to the account associated with the seller is
3 initiated after at least one of (i) a predetermined period,
4 beginning upon receipt of the first notice, has elapsed, or (ii)
5 receipt of the second notice.

1 28. A system for integrated event tracking of an electronic escrow
2 transaction, comprising:

3 a communications port configured to receive and to transmit
4 information via a network;

5 a processor in communication with the communications port and
6 configured to direct at least one network communication with each
7 of a purchaser, a seller and at least one financial institution in
8 effecting an electronic escrow transaction arising out of a sale of
9 goods or services made via a network, and to log and store each
10 communication associated with the electronic escrow transaction;
11 and

12 a memory in communication with the processor and configured to
13 store the logged communications.

1 29. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further

2 configured to:

3 receive an instruction from the purchaser, via network
4 communication, to effect the electronic escrow transaction; and
5 store an indication of the received instruction in the memory.

1 30. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 initiate a debit from an account associated with the
4 purchaser;

5 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
6 debit from the purchaser account;

7 initiate a credit to an account associated with the seller;
8 and

9 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
10 credit to the seller account.

11 31. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
12 configured to:

13 initiate a debit from an account associated with a processing
14 agent; and

15 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
16 debit from the processing agent account.

1 32. The system of claim 31, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to initiate a credit to an
3 account associated with the seller and store an indication in the
4 memory of the initiation of the credit to the seller account; and

5 the credit to the seller account is a corresponding credit to
6 the debit from the processing agent account.

1 33. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 transmit a notice, via network communication, to the seller
4 that funds from an account associated with the purchaser are
5 available and that the seller should ship the goods to, or provide
6 the service for, the purchaser; and

store an indication in the memory that the notice has been transmitted to the seller.

34. The system of claim 33, wherein the notice is transmitted after at least one of (i) a predetermined period, beginning at initiation of a debit to an account associated with the purchaser, has elapsed, or (ii) funds from the purchaser account are credited to an account associated with a processing agent.

35. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further configured to:

receive, via network communication, a first notice of (i) the goods having been shipped to the purchaser, or (ii) the services having been performed for the purchaser;

store in the memory an indication that the first notice has been received;

transmit a second notice, via network communication, to the purchaser that the seller has one of (i) shipped the goods to the purchaser, or (ii) performed the services for the purchaser; and

store in the memory an indication that the second notice has been transmitted to the purchaser.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein the first notice includes a delivery tracking number.

37. The system of claim 35, wherein the first notice is transmitted by at least one of (i) the seller, or (ii) a shipping agent.

38. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further configured to:

receive, via network communication from at least one of the purchaser, the seller, and a shipping agent, a notice of one of (i) the goods having been received from the seller and being acceptable, or (ii) the services having been acceptably performed by the seller; and

store in the memory an indication that the notice has been

9 received.

1 39. The system of claim 38, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to initiate a credit to an
3 account associated with the seller and store an indication in the
4 memory of the initiation of the credit to the seller account; and
5 the credit to the seller account is initiated subsequent to
6 receiving the notice.

1 40. The system of claim 28, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to receive, via network
3 communication, a notice of (i) the goods having been shipped by the
4 seller, or (ii) the services having been performed by the seller,
5 initiate a credit to an account associated with the seller, store
6 an indication in the memory of the initiation of the credit to the
7 seller account;

8 the credit to the seller account is initiated after a
9 predetermined period, beginning at receipt of the notice; and

10 the notice is received from at least one of (i) the seller, or
11 (ii) a shipping agent.

1 41. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 receive, via network communication, a notice of one of (i) the
4 goods having been received from the seller and being unacceptable,
5 (ii) the goods having not been received from the seller, (iii) the
6 services having not been acceptably performed by the seller, or
7 (iv) the services having not been performed by the seller; and

8 store in the memory an indication that the notice has been
9 received.

1 42. The system of claim 41, wherein the notice includes a notice
2 to suspend a pending credit to an account associated with the
3 seller.

43. The system of claim 41, wherein the notice includes a notice to reverse a debit to an account associated with the purchaser.

44. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further configured to:

receive, via network communication from at least one of the purchaser or a shipping agent, a first notice that the goods have been returned shipped to the seller;

store in the memory an indication that the first notice has been received;

transmit to the seller, via network communication, a second notice that the goods have been returned shipped from the purchaser; and

store in the memory an indication that the second notice has been transmitted to the seller.

45. The system of claim 44, wherein the first notice includes a delivery tracking number.

46. The system of claim 44, wherein the processor is further configured to:

receive, via network communication from at least one of the seller or a shipping agent, a third notice that the goods have been received by the seller; and

store in the memory an indication that the third notice has been received.

47. The system of claim 28, wherein:

the processor is further configured to initiate a credit to an account associated with the purchaser and store in the memory an indication of the initiation of the credit to the purchaser account; and

the credit to the purchaser account is initiated after at least one of (i) receipt of a notice, via network communication from a least one of the seller or a shipping agent, that the goods have been returned to the seller by the purchaser and accepted by

10 the seller, or (ii) a predetermined period, beginning at a
11 notification to the seller that the purchaser has shipped the goods
12 to the seller, has elapsed.

1 48. The system of claim 28, wherein the goods or services are
2 goods or services purchased from an internet auction.

1 49. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 initiate a debit from an account associated with the
4 purchaser;

5 initiate a credit to an escrow account associated with a
6 processing agent;

7 initiate a debit to the escrow account associated with the
8 processing agent;

9 initiate a credit to an account associated with the seller;

10 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
11 debit to the purchaser account; and

12 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
13 credit to the seller account.

1 50. The system of claim 49, wherein the credit to the escrow
2 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the purchaser
3 account.

1 51. The system of claim 49, wherein the credit to the seller
2 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the escrow
3 account.

1 52. The system of claim 28, wherein:

2 the communications port is further configured to receive an
3 instruction, via a web page generated subsequent to the purchaser
4 selecting a hyper-link presented to the purchaser by an Internet
5 web site selling goods or services, to direct execution of an
6 electronic escrow transaction for a sale transaction; and

the web page presented to the purchaser includes details of the purchase made from the internet web site.

53. The system of claim 28, wherein the stored logged communications include an indication of the date and time of each communication's direction or receipt.

54. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further configured to retrieve any of the stored communications from the memory.

55. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further configured to (i) receive, from a shipping agent, a first notice that goods have been delivered to the purchaser, (ii) store in the memory an indication that the first notice has been received, (iii) receive, from the purchaser, a second notice that the delivered goods are acceptable, (iv) store in the memory an indication that the second notice has been received, and (v) initiate a credit to an account associated with the seller.

56. The system of claim 55, wherein the credit to the seller account is initiated after at least one of (i) a predetermined period, beginning upon receipt of the first notice, has elapsed, or (ii) receipt of the second notice.

57. An article of manufacture for integrated event tracking of an electronic escrow transaction, the article of manufacture comprising:

a computer readable medium; and

computer programming stored on the medium;

wherein the stored computer programming is configured to be readable from the computer readable medium by a computer to thereby cause the computer to operate so as to:

receive an instruction from a purchaser, via a network, to effect an electronic escrow transaction associated with a sale, made via the network, of goods or services from a seller;

12 direct at least one network communication with each of the
13 purchaser, the seller and at least one financial institution in
14 effecting the electronic escrow transaction; and
15 store a log of each communication associated with the
16 electronic escrow transaction in a memory.

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